Moxa (mogusa in Japanese, fuchiba in Okinawan) in the traditional Chinese and Japanese pharmacopoeia, had considerable former importance. In powdered form, it is placed on a swelling or painful part, which is cauterised by burning the moxa with a charcoal stick or a hot piece of metal. Moxa can be bought, packed and prepared in Japan, at most Okinawan village stores. But wild moxa is not used for this purpose. Formerly a brew was made of the wild plant and drunk for bringing down a fever. It is still used with the yagi, another plant, as a broth. Now aspirin, also obtainable at village shops is commonly taken for these ills.

These plants are now nearly forgotten. In Hanashiro only the nigana and mogusa were remembered. In Minatogawa, the situation was the same. In Nagamo, a few slippers from the pandanus are still made. The virtual disappearance of home industries based on the pandanus is the result of a diminished supply and in part to loss of skills and failure of a younger generation to acquire them either because of the attraction of more exciting occupations or to lack of interest. This is not meant as a generalization. Home industries based on the use of uncultivated plants, has not vanished from all parts of Okinawa. Activity changes from locality to locality, even when these are close together. Slipper production from the pandanus has practically disappeared in Minatogawa, but across the river in the village of Horikawa they are still made.

Plant	Hanashiro	Minatogawa-Nagamo	Matsuda
Pandanus (adan)	Scarce, not used	Some slippers made	Not used
Nigana	Root boiled and used as a medicine		Broth for stomach and headaches.
Obako	Not used	For swellings; hot leaf used as a poultice.	Not used
Moxa (mogusa)	Used as in Minatogawa	Wild plant boiled, brew used for bringing down fever. Powdered form purchased.	Used in combination with another plant, the yagi, resulting broth used for general complaints.

316 425 435 (1951-52) is from ¥300-400 per tsubo (about four square yards), much higher than ordinary agricultural land. The price varies with supposed quality. The good judgment of the purchaser is necessary for success. He must estimate the quantity of stone, its depth, whether there may be cracks, fissures, or black streaks below, and the effect of underground water as he cuts down deeper. In a year, a good stonecutter can remove stone from about four tsubo of land. If he has extra capital, he may hire help.

316 472 The types of employment found are either the single operator or the small operator who has one or more employees. The industry is not notable for large capital outlays, or many employees of a single operator. A simple partnership is common. There may be some division of labor, with the owner of the rights doing all the cutting, while a friend or relative who does this as a secondary occupation assists in the removal of the stone and in loading it on a horse cart. The operator who has a piece of land too large to work by himself may hire someone. The employee (yatoi in Japanese, ninpu in Okinawan) is paid according to skill: ¥100 a day for a beginning 17 or 18 year old boy, ¥150 to the experienced, [965] and ¥200 to the worker who can do all phases of the work quickly and skillfully.

[809] [461] [965] Much depends on the nature of the stone being worked. This varies by locality and with moisture content. It will require 8 hours for a man to cut a six shaku (about six feet) length of hard rock 1 shaku 2 sun (14.4 inches) deep, but he may be able to make three cuttings of moist or wet rock in the same period. Working time naturally varies with the strength and skill of the cutter. For this reason, piece work payment is common. The employee, however, may work unused portions of the holdings, receiving two-thirds of the value of the stone cut.

3

Tools and Types of Stone Cut

413 Six tools are used in cutting and extracting the sandstone: (1) the hichi (Okinawan). This tool, about six feet long, resembles a crow bar, but has a sharp chisel edge for cutting the stone. (2) A sharp hand axe (ono in Japanese, yūki in Okinawan) for chipping and finishing, (3) the ishiyūki, a smaller axe, used like the yūki, for chipping and finishing but principally in shaping pyramidal stones (kenchi). The tool is also used to knock off the rough edges of the stone, where it has been split, an operation often performed by old men. (4) The kusukacha (Okinawan). This reminds one of a small light golf iron. It has a handle four or five feet long with a metal strip attached at an angle to one end. It is used to rake off chippings and dust that accumulate in the groove while the cut is being made with the long chisel. (5) Wedges (iya in Okinawan), and (6) sledge hammers are used to split off the stone after the cut has been made.

316 Methods of working with these tools are very simple. The surface dirt is cleared away until the stone to be cut is visible and clean.

The truck or horsecart of the buyer comes to the stonecutting area, the blocks are loaded and taken away. Prior to sale, for convenience, stone may be taken from the cutting area. It is loaded on horse carts, the men carrying the heavy blocks by means of ropes looped around the ends of the stone and over poles which in turn rest on the shoulders. A six foot length (1 ken linear measure), one foot wide and about ten inches thick sells for Y140 (1951-52).

Foot injuries are the chief hazards of this occupation. The toes may be accidentally cut by the long chisel, and there is danger of bruising or crushing by accidentally dropping the block, or by rolling when it is being dislodged. Very hard and calloused hands are the mark of the stonecutter; his hands are especially conspicuous for the hard, raised areas on the palm around the base of the fingers, the result of the constant lifting and pounding of the long chisel. There is also danger to the eyes in flying chips but few use glasses or goggles.

Like some phases of fishing, this work is for the young and the physically mature men. After the middle forties or early fifties, a man no longer does the heavy work and confines himself to lighter chores. The very old and the retired may chip and finish the foundation and the pyramidal stones.

If a cutter is unable to extract all the stone in a plot whose stone he has bought, there are also customary solutions. When the father dies, his son continues the workings and returns the field to the owner. If a stone worker moves to another village when only half the work has been done, he arranges for a friend, relative, or neighbor to take over the remaining part.

4

Restoring the Land

Formerly excavations (which might be 10 or 15 feet deep and the size of a large room) were refilled by the buyer of the stone rights. Rocks, pebbles, and miscellaneous trash were used as fill, but following the war there has been a heavy demand for rock and stone for road construction. As a consequence, many excavations are now only partly refilled. After refilling, houses are built on the sites of formerly excavated land. Here and there one can see sweet potatoes or vegetables growing on land which formerly was covered with stone. The original state of the land, its appearance after excavation and its restoration may be seen in Figure 2. Evidences of this reclamation may be seen throughout the stoneworking area.

Minatogawa, because it lacks vegetation for protective and decorative purposes, is a good example of the use and adaptation of stone to local needs. There are still stone fences, waist or shoulder height, and many small stone boundary lines, a foot or two and of uneven height. Coral stones, weathered by the sea, honeycombed and pocked, are seen everywhere.